Were Zionist Jews Responsible for the Scofield Bible?

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In recent years, a narrative has gained traction suggesting that Zionist Jews were instrumental in funding the creation and distribution of the Scofield Reference Bible as part of the Zionist plan to gain legitimacy as a nation state. This claim posits that the Zionist agenda significantly influenced the rise of dispensationalism—a theological framework emphasizing a literal interpretation of biblical prophecies, particularly those concerning Israel. Such assertions often appeal to conspiracy theorists or individuals eager to uncover hidden influences shaping religious thought. But how much truth is there to these claims?

Does It Really Matter?

Even if we were to entertain the notion that Zionist Jews funded the Scofield Bible, it's essential to ask: does this undermine dispensationalism's theological validity? In other words, even *if* (and as we will see, it is a big *if*) it could be proven that Zionists had a major role to play in the promotion of the Scofield Bible—which had a significant impact in how

many Christians interpreted prophecy and the nation of Israel in particular—would that discredit the study notes in the Scofield Bible?

Biblically, God has a history of using unexpected channels and individuals outside the faith to accomplish His purposes. For instance, Cyrus the Great, a Persian king and a non-believer, was instrumental in allowing the Israelites to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). His motivations were political, yet he played a pivotal role in fulfilling God's plans. Additionally, we are told in multiple places that God was using the Assyrians and the Babylonians to accomplish His purposes (cf. Isa 10:5-6, 15; Hab 1:6ff). Similarly, if non-Christian entities supported the dissemination of the Scofield Bible, it wouldn't necessarily negate its theological contributions or insights. The reason people bring up this point is to try to discredit the theology through guilt by association.

Looking for Evidence of the Jewish Zionist Connection with Scofield

Although the above point is true, I still think it necessary to do due diligence and investigate such claims. I've done my best to research the documents from the time of Darby and Scofield, and I've even talked to a few friends of mine who are much more knowledgeable in these areas. Despite my perusing of the historical records and consulting various professors in the field, I could find no concrete evidence supporting the assertion that there was Zionist involvement with the Scofield Bible. The lack of receipts, documented transactions, or credible historical sources suggests that these claims are more speculative than factual.

Notably, in my research I *did find* four individuals who are prominently associated with the funding of the Scofield Reference Bible:

1. Alwyn Ball, Jr. of New York
2. John T. Pirie of Chicago
3. John Buss of St. Louis
4. Francis E. Fitch of New York

These men were lay businessmen, with Fitch, Pirie, and Ball being associated with the Plymouth Brethren—a Christian movement connected with Darby and known for its emphasis on the authority of Scripture. Arno C. Gaebelein, a close associate of C. I. Scofield, noted that Pirie and Ball were the primary financial sponsors of Scofield Study Bible. I was able to find a piece written by Michael D. Stallard, a scholar on dispensationalism, who corroborates this in his writings.

Addressing Modern Claims

The modern popularity of these unfounded claims can be seen in multiple venues. One might note the viral interview between country singer John Rich and former Fox News host Tucker Carlson. In the interview, Rich suggested that the Rothschild family was connected to the printing and distribution of the Scofield Bible. In an attempt to ascertain where Rich was getting his information, I turned to the work of someone who has spent considerable time researching the Rothschild family, investigative journalist Mike Rothschild. He said the following about the Carlson and Rich interview:

> "Carlson and Rich's claim that the Rothschilds helped create or fund 'Christian Zionism' also don't carry any kind of evidentiary weight. Many Rothschilds were Zionists, of course. Many also were not. The family is extremely large and varied in its beliefs and priorities, and so simply ascribing 'the Rothschilds' as having done something is a meaningless statement that only serves to fuel antisemitic conspiracy theories… The sources connecting all of this together are impossibly thin, mostly consisting of blogs and a few podcasts that throw the accusation out without evidence."
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> — *Mike Rothschild*

Mike Rothschild further points out that much of the supposed "evidence" traces back to dubious sources, such as publications by Lyndon LaRouche—a figure known for promoting conspiracy theories with antisemitic undertones.

To be absolutely clear, I am completely open to the idea that Zionist Jews helped fund the Scofield Bible. It would impact me very little. But as of yet, I have not found any evidence to support such a claim. In fact, the search has caused me to have great concerns about people who would repeat such assertions without having evidence that supports such claims.

Final Thoughts

The claim that Zionist Jews or the Rothschild family funded the Scofield Reference Bible lacks credible evidence. The documented history points to dedicated Christian businessmen who supported Scofield's work out of a shared commitment to disseminating biblical teachings. While it's crucial to approach historical narratives with a critical eye, it's equally important to distinguish between substantiated facts and unfounded speculation. As Christians we have a very high burden of proof and we must think through things analytically and carefully.

Ultimately, the theological impact of the Scofield Bible remains significant regardless of its financial backers. However, this controversy serves as a microcosm of a broader challenge facing Christians today. In an era where trust in institutions can be strained, there is a temptation to embrace conspiracy theories and believe we are being misled. This makes the pursuit of wisdom and discernment more crucial than ever. As believers, it's imperative to

ground our understanding in thorough research and factual evidence, ensuring that our faith is informed by truth rather than speculation. By doing so, we honor our Lord through a commitment to truth that lies at the very heart of what it means to be a Christian.